

jobs—high paying jobs—I want to see us return to the issue of trade negotiating authority in the coming session of Congress. I want to see both Houses of Congress move on as broad a front as possible to secure our economic future.

Because of what is at stake, we must make progress where we can, regardless of how broad a consensus we can ultimately achieve. We need to address the reality of these impending items on the international agenda and define the strategy the United States will promote in each. That does not give us the luxury of waiting until a final consensus has been reached on every issue raised in our recent debates. We need to be able to make an impact now and I will be working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we do.

As for building a stronger bipartisan consensus for the long run on trade, my sense from our debates is that there are a number of important issues that need to be examined. They need to be examined in a way that would excise the politics and help us all understand the dynamics at work in an increasingly global economy. We need to develop a mechanism for addressing these issues, helping us resolve our collective concerns, and allowing us to move forward in a way that will benefit all working Americans. I intend to work closely with my colleagues toward this end in the coming months.

Let me conclude with words of praise for each and every Member of this body. I believe that we have shown incredible leadership ourselves on an issue of the utmost importance to America.

I know we share a common goal of a stronger American economy that benefits all working men and women. In the months ahead, let us unite in an effort to resolve the differences between ourselves in order to remove the roadblocks that stand between us and that common goal. Let us pull together in this coming session of Congress to redefine the debate in terms of the progress we can make together toward our ultimate objective.

Based on the Senate's record in the past, I have great confidence that we can and will take that step forward to embrace a brighter American future. I thank my colleagues for their efforts over the recent weeks, and look forward to the opportunity to rejoin them in pursuit of the greater good for all Americans in this coming session.

Mr. President, I make a point of order that a quorum is not present.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MAURICE JOHNSON

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to recognize the

work of a man who has been a real asset to this institution. He has many fans in this room, both here on the floor of the Senate and up there in the press gallery. His name is Maurice Johnson, Superintendent of the Senate Press Photographers Gallery. He is retiring this year after nearly 30 years.

What a perspective—30 years of life in the Senate through a photographer's eye. Maurice has seen the entire range of congressional milestones, celebrations, inaugurations, investigations, and, of course, occasional legislation. He has taken part in sharing those events with the world, helping in many ways to ensure that the media coverage has run smoothly. No one has yet found a corner of the Capitol for which Maurice doesn't know the best angle and lighting.

Maurice is a voice for all photographers who cover the Senate day to day. As liaison between the Senators and the photographers, he has been an effective adviser, advocate, and coordinator.

He has been most helpful to my staff and to me over the past year and a half as we have adjusted to our leadership role. I thank him for his graciousness always under all circumstances.

We should not forget that Maurice is an accomplished photographer himself. He captured history as he covered the administrations of Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. Many of the images that we have from national political campaigns and conventions are Maurice's work. Some assignments must have been less like work than others, though. Photography for him has included the Redskins games or the U.S. Open golf tournament. Sometimes it has been the Miss America pageant. It certainly seems to me he hasn't exactly always had a tough day at the office. It sounds like it has been fun.

His talents have been rewarded by a steady stream of awards that have names like "Best Picture of the Year" and "First Prize." He has been honored nationally for single photos, for his work in the Senate Photographers Gallery, and for the entire span of his career.

At a recent reception in Maurice's honor, the room overflowed with colleagues, friends, and family members who conveyed their affection and high regard for him. Now, as the session draws to a close, I want to take the opportunity to let Maurice know how much we in the Senate appreciate him and his work. I am sure my colleagues join me in thanking him for his many years of dedication. We wish him, his wife Lanny, and their children, Keith and Maureen, well.

I yield the floor, Mr. President, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ABSENCE OF DEBATE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I noted on Monday of this week that the administration had taken an important step on drug policy. I think, however, it was very much a misstep, and I do not think the administration played fair in doing it. Each year, the Congress requires the administration to submit a list of countries to be considered for certification on drug cooperation. This is called the Majors List.

The list serves as a basis for considering whether the countries listed have fully cooperated with the United States to control drug production and trafficking. It is this list that the President then considers for certification on March 1 of each year.

This year, and in keeping with what seems to be a tradition with this administration, the list came up to the Hill very, very late. Because of this and because of the history of tardiness, I decided to send a message to the administration, one that seemed necessary to get their attention. So I put a hold on several ambassadorial nominations to send the signal that Congress takes compliance with this certification law on the Majors List very seriously. After more than a week's delay, we finally received the list. As a result, I removed my holds, but the list as a document contains an omission that deserves careful notice.

Left off the list were the countries of Syria and Lebanon. Not just left off, but what does that mean, "left off"? In this backhanded way, the administration decided in one big step to certify these two countries as somehow fully cooperating with the rest of the world, in this case the United States, on drug policy.

Let's think about this for a moment. Syria has been decertified for over 10 years. Syria was not certified even during Desert Storm or Desert Shield when it was one of our allies in that war. Lebanon has just received a national-interest waiver—a decertification with somehow a get-out-of-jail-free card. Now, without debate or without substantive explanation, the administration has simply left these two countries off the list. This is a momentous change in policy. It reverses years of consideration, and it appears to ignore considerable evidence.

In the letter forwarding the list to Congress, the President makes two arguments for doing this. Neither argument stands up well.

The first argument seems to advance the idea that because Syrian and Lebanese cultivation of opium has dropped below 1,000 hectares, that this act alone justifies a reconsideration of their being on the list.

It may justify a reconsideration, possibly, but it hardly justifies backdoor certification, and this is backdoor certification. Even the State Department's own annual drug report makes